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South Carolina
Department of Transportation

September 7, 2007

2007-328-C

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2007 SEP 11 AM 10:43
SC PUBLIC SAFETY
COMMUNICATIONS

Mr. Charles Terreni
Chief Clerk and Administrator
Public Service Commission of South Carolina
Attn: Docketing Department
Saluda Building
101 Executive Center Drive, Suite 100
Columbia, South Carolina 29210

RE: Implementation of 511 Service for Travel Information

Dear Mr. Terreni:

The South Carolina Department of Transportation (SCDOT) would like to submit a petition for the designation of the "511" abbreviated dialing code for travel information and request that SCDOT be designated as the lead agency for 511 in South Carolina. In July 2000, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) assigned 511 as the number for nationwide access to travel information services. Providing travel information via 511 allows travelers to access highway, multimodal, evacuation, and other pertinent travel information from a single number via landline or wireless phones. Information accessible from 511 will be in a format that will allow the caller to define their call to their needs.

The FCC order did not mandate how to implement 511; therefore, the technical details of implementation, cost recovery, content and call transferring were left up to the individual agencies responsible for implementing and operating the systems. As of May 2007, 511 systems have been successfully deployed in twenty-four states and have proven to be a valuable resource for travel information. Georgia launched their system on August 15, 2007, and it is expected that three additional states will launch their programs before the end of the year.

The 511 system will build upon SCDOT's existing advanced traveler information system (ATMS) including highway advisory radios, highway camera images, and variable message signs, which are located in all metropolitan areas of the state. The current system has proven to be an invaluable resource during coastal evacuations, major highway incidents, and Amber Alerts. In addition, SCDOT is currently developing an integrated software package to enhance the capabilities of the ATMS. One component of this package provides the necessary traffic condition databases to drive a 511 system.

The 511 system is planned to be implemented as one statewide toll-free number, and SCDOT will ask the wireless and landline carriers serving South Carolina to translate the three-digit 511 telephone number to the toll-free number. It is the view of SCDOT and of the Federal Highway Administration that callers shall not be charged more than the cost of a local call to dial 511. Any cost incurred by the telephone carriers in South Carolina to program the translation will be borne by SCDOT.



Mr. Charles Terreni
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On June 2, 2004, SCDOT facilitated a meeting with the South Carolina Telephone Association (SCTA), and the following carriers attended the meeting:

BellSouth	Chester Telephone Company	Chesnee TEI
Farmers Telephone Co-Op	Sandhill Telephone Co-Op	PBT
Sprint	St. Stephen Telephone	

All members of the SCTA were invited to the meeting, and the purpose of the meeting was to gain input and support from the carriers as SCDOT plans the 511 system.

Likewise, cellular providers in the state were contacted in June and July 2004 and include:

Airgate PCS	Alltel	AT&T Wireless
Cingular Wireless	Nextel	Public Service Cellular
Sprint PCS	T-Mobile	Triton PCS
US Cellular	Verizon Wireless	

SCDOT plans to publish the toll-free number as well as market 511. By publishing the toll-free number in addition to 511, callers outside of South Carolina can also call South Carolina's 511 system. To control border issues, SCDOT will coordinate our 511 system with North Carolina and Georgia. Making this valuable information available through a single statewide phone number, will prove to be a significant tool as well as convenience for South Carolina's transportation users.

Thank you in advance for your consideration of this matter. SCDOT will make the necessary employees available to the public service commission to discuss this request. If you have any questions, please contact Tony Sheppard at 803-737-1459.

Sincerely,


H. B. Limehouse, Jr.
Secretary of Transportation

HBL:ths

cc: Tony L. Chapman, State Highway Engineer
J. C. Watson, Deputy State Highway Engineer
Jocelyn Boyd, Deputy Clerk – Docketing, Public Service Commission

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